

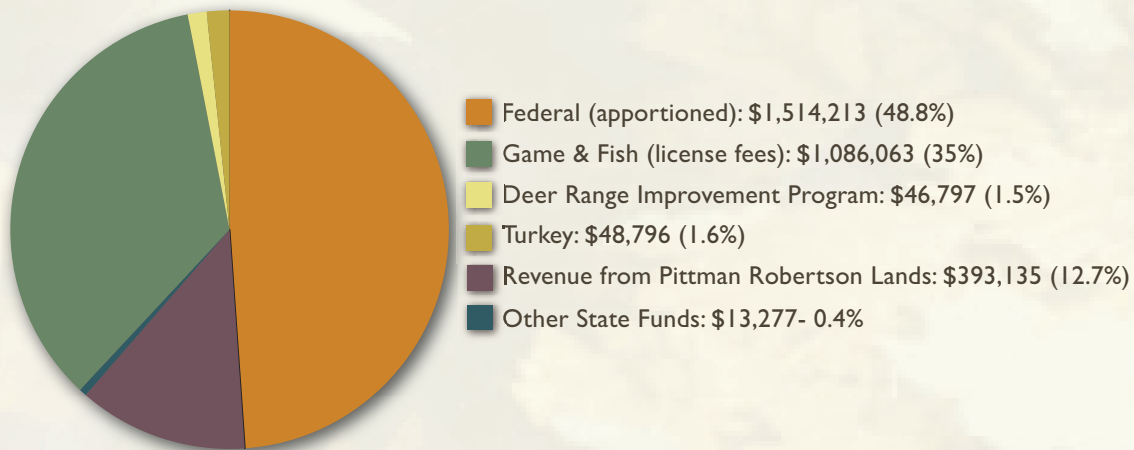
A person wearing an orange jacket, camouflage vest, and olive green pants is walking away from the camera on a dirt path. They are carrying a shotgun over their shoulder and wearing black gloves and boots. A small white dog with black spots is walking alongside them. The background is a forest with autumn foliage.

# Wildlife Area Maintenance and Wildlife-Related Recreation



## Fiscal Year 2010

### Wildlife Area Maintenance and Wildlife-Related Recreation Expenditures by Fund Source



On non-routine maintenance, the Wildlife Division worked on or constructed:

#### Maintenance

- 93 water control structures (92 were planned);
- 64 miles of ditches (63 were planned);
- 43 miles of dikes (40 were planned);
- 21 parking lots (22 were planned);
- 18 buildings (16 were planned);
- 11 pumps (eight were planned); and
- Four dams (one was planned).

#### Construction

- Two barriers/gates;
- One new bridge;
- One new building;
- One parking lot (seven were planned);
- 116 signs (80 were planned); and
- Four hours on non-routine roads and trails maintenance.

On routine maintenance, the Wildlife Division spent:

- 9,709 hours maintaining 126 dams, 177 dike miles, 83 ditch miles, 44 pumps and 313 water-control structures (97 dams, 175 dike miles, 125 ditch miles, 42 pumps and 300 water-control structures were planned);
- 9,170 hours maintaining 134 buildings (123 were planned);
- 8,847 hours maintaining/repairing 286 pieces of equipment (239 were planned);
- 4,412 hours maintaining 1,441 parking lots (1,445 were planned);
- 1,839 hours maintaining 23,779 signs (26,168 signs were planned);
- 1,774 hours maintaining 161 miles of roads and 372 miles of trails (156 miles of roads and 381 miles of trails were planned);

- 1,482 hours on managed hunting and trapping;
- 1,317 hours maintaining 1,725 barriers/gates (1,743 barrier/gates were planned);
- 718 hours maintaining other types of structures;
- 704 hours on four shooting ranges;
- 584 hours removing refuse on 3,376 acres (3,175 acres were planned);
- 409 hours maintaining 51 bridges (49 bridges were planned);
- 245 hours on the Hunter Access Program on 5,924 acres (6,524 acres were planned);
- 25 Hunter Access Program partnerships were completed (43 partnerships were planned); and
- 41 hours on field trials (eight were accomplished and four were planned).

As outlined earlier in the Habitat Management section of this report, the Wildlife Division is charged with planning and implementation of all land-management activities on roughly 450,000 acres on state wildlife management areas and state recreation areas throughout the southern half of the Lower Peninsula, and jointly manages (with the DNR's Forest Management Division) 3.9 million acres of state forest land. It is an awesome responsibility, one tied directly to the depth and breadth of hunting, fishing and wildlife-related recreation opportunities available to the public.

The Wildlife Division is the lead administering division of all state wildlife management areas. Most of these lands were acquired, and all are maintained, with hunter license fees and federal assistance through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Acts. Additionally, the Wildlife Division is the lead administering division for all state lands acquired with funds from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Acts, regardless of where they occur. Responsibilities for planning and managing wildlife resources in state recreation areas and state forests were established under separate co-management agreements with the DNR's Recreation and Forest Management divisions.

## State Game-Area Maintenance

DNR state game areas undergo a host of maintenance efforts every year. In FY 2010, that list included dike repairs, replacement of water-control structures, grading and surfacing of parking lots and trails, equipment repair, vehicle barriers, sign replacement and building maintenance. Although an evaluation of maintenance needs of the entire infrastructure is conducted every year, some maintenance may be limited to inspection to ensure that no further upkeep or preventative work is required. Highlights included maintenance of:

- Game area and research buildings, as needed. Utilities were provided to ensure buildings are maintained in a safe, operable manner. Routine building repairs involving plumbing, heating and roofing were conducted as needed.
- Parking lots, roads and trails, through mowing, grading, snowplowing and replacing gravel surface materials and culverts as needed. Brush and overhanging limbs were removed to prevent vehicle damage, and blow-downs were removed.
- Boundary and information signs, which help area users identify public hunting land and help neighbors understand the boundaries. Posting of signs is a continuous and major work activity at many game areas because of vandalism, storm damage, etc. Informational signs identify various habitat projects, provide a list of area use rules, and credit the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program. Directional and warning signs are also placed and repaired when necessary.
- Vehicle barriers are maintained to prevent damage to habitat management projects and disturbance to wildlife. Natural materials available nearby the site are used whenever possible. Gates and other barriers are repaired, painted, and replaced as needed.

Additionally:

- Routine maintenance, cleaning and general inspections are done on several water-control structures and ditches, all dams are regularly inspected, and all debris is removed. Banks are stabilized on-site before erosion becomes a serious problem. Routine dike maintenance – including spot repairs, mowing, seeding, burning and brush and tree removal – is completed on numerous sites annually. Pumps used to manipulate water levels for wetland management are routinely inspected and maintained.
- Regular preventative maintenance and repairs are accomplished annually to keep aging equipment operational.
- Nest structures for geese, osprey, eagles, wood ducks, bluebirds and squirrels are maintained by volunteers and state personnel. Hunting clubs and service groups continue to perform much of this work.
- Repairs to observation towers, boardwalks, docks, boat launches, hunting blinds, accessibility enhancements and small boat and canoe accesses are accomplished as needed.
- Regularly scheduled trash removal (often assisted by local groups) is necessary at most game areas. Tires and appliances continue to be dumped on public land in increased amounts since the advent of additional disposal fees for recycling of tires due to greenhouse gases.

## Non-Routine Wildlife Maintenance Projects

### Examples:

**Lapeer Off-Road Vehicle Control** – In the Lapeer State Game Area, there were two major off-road vehicle problems: at the old gravel pit and Huckleberry Circle. After working with a DNR survey crew to determine the correct property lines, Holly Wildlife Area staff purchased 46 tons of boulders for use in reducing ORV access to two parking lots. The boulders serve as barriers to keep ORVs out of the areas and to deter people from dumping garbage into the gravel pit. Providing this type of protection to Pittman-Robertson-maintained lands is important and will help meet the wildlife management objectives of the master plan.

**Russell Lake Dam Stabilization** – The Russell Lake Dam in Roscommon County was built in the early 1900s. The state acquired this property in 2007 with a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Shortly after acquisition, the earthen dam washed out. The dam impounded only about 16 inches of water on Russell Lake and Russell Creek, according to the survey conducted at the time of purchase. The water level on Russell Lake had shown a negligible drop after the dam breach, but the washout in the dam continued to grow in size as erosion progressed.

Complete restoration of the dam was unnecessary, but the earthen dam needed to be stabilized. Per the specifications from engineers, the sharp cut through the dam required sloped edges and stabilization with rip-rap. The spillway was widened and stabilized with rip-rap per approved design and all remaining washouts were repaired. A resource damage report is on file for this site.

## Wildlife-Related Recreation

**Hunt Drawings** – The Wildlife Division conducts annual drawings to distribute limited-quota hunting licenses for turkey, bear, elk and antlerless deer, plus opportunities to participate in reserved waterfowl hunts and the Pure Michigan Hunt. Drawing applicants are selected at random for the opportunity to purchase a reserved license; after the drawing, any remaining licenses are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. The Wildlife Division drawings specialist coordinates hunt drawings and related customer service, communications and licensing operations, working closely with staff throughout the DNR. In 2010, division staff invested about 3,300 hours in drawing management and customer service, serving over 426,000 participants whose application and license fees contributed more than \$10 million to Michigan's Game and Fish Protection Fund. For more information, go to [www.michigan.gov/huntdrawings](http://www.michigan.gov/huntdrawings).



**Pure Michigan Hunt** – The Pure Michigan Hunt (created in 2009) is a unique multispecies hunting opportunity, giving hunters the chance to purchase as many \$4 applications as they like. The first drawing was held in January 2010, and three lucky winners captured the chance to hunt one any-sex elk, one bear, one spring turkey, one fall turkey and one antlerless deer. In addition, the winners were allowed to pick a first selection at a managed waterfowl area during the reserved hunt period. In 2010, there were 33,758 Pure Michigan Hunt applications sold, raising more than \$135,000 for the DNR's Game and Fish Protection Fund.

## Hunter and Trapper Data

Hunting and trapping license sales during the 2010 seasons show that participation declined about 3 percent from 2009 levels. See table for details.

	2010	2009	% Change
Total Hunters	784,035	810,153	-3.2%
Total Deer Hunters	657,406	682,193	-3.6%
Antlerless Deer Licenses	322,621	344,754	-6.4%
Spring Turkey Hunters	115,114	120,763	-4.7%
Fall Turkey Hunters	27,313	20,758	31.6%
Fall Turkey Licenses	30,006	20,758	44.6%
Bear Hunters	8,976	8,953	-0.3%
Small Game Hunters	253,764	257,504	-1.5%
Fur Harvester Licenses	21,984	20,969	4.8%
Waterfowl Hunters	56,690	58,210	-2.6%
Elk Hunters/ Licenses	227	366	-38.0%
Total Licenses	1,965,232	2,022,350	-2.8%
Youth Hunters	30,308	32,027	-5.4%